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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S., MEPP, U.S., ITALY, ECONOMIC;BERLIN

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[1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Print media led with reports that Chancellor Merkel has come under pressure from her own ranks because of her alleged weak leadership style (Sueddeutsche, FAZ, Berliner Zeitung, Die Welt), while Tagesspiegel and Berliner Morgenpost centered on the cold spell that

has hit northern Germany in particular. Editorials focused on the CDU leadership crisis and on the attack on the Togolese soccer team in Angola. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with reports on the weather chaos in northern Germany.

[1](#)2. (U.S.) President Obama's Remarks on Improving Security

Saturday media reported on President Obama's remarks on intelligence and aviation security, highlighting that the President said that "we are at war against al Qaida" (FAZ headline). Today's broadcast media carried short news reports on Obama's interview with People magazine, underlining that "President Obama does not want to send soldiers to Yemen and Somalia. He said that the most effective way would be to work with international partners" (ZDF-TV's Heute). Today's Frankfurter Allgemeine headlined: "Doubt in America about strategy

against al Qaida," noting that: "Following the publication of a video, in which the later suicide bomber Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi swears to take revenge for the death of the Pakistani Taliban leader

Baituillah Mehsud, a new debate has flared up in the U.S. about the right strategy in the fight against al Qaida and the terror network al Qaida." The paper concluded: "The government in Islamabad and the American leadership try to pull the moderate Taliban to their side.

However, terrorism experts make clear that the cooperation between al Qaida and the Taliban is so close nowadays that a distinction between the organizations is hardly possible."

Sddeutsche (1/9) remarked in an editorial that U.S. terror experts failed to learn the lessons of the attacks on September 11, 2001. "The White House tries to play down a new debate during its first investigations, saying that the problems of the failed attack on Christmas Day could not be compared with the circumstances that made things easier for the terrorists on 9/11, 2001. This interpretation is grotesque. The old and new mistakes are very similar. In both cases terror experts failed to put larger pieces together correctly.

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In this respect, the recent mistakes are even more scandalous than the past ones."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (1/9) editorialized: "To the dismay of the left wing of the Democrats, Obama stuck to a larger part of [Bush's] security policy. This is a continuity that Obama certainly did not desire.... September 11 was eight years ago, but the threat continues to be imminent. With that, the topic of security has not been taken off the list of American concerns. Obama understands this."

Die Welt (1/9) opined: "The averted attack by the radical-Islamic Nigerian on the flight to Detroit has caught the West with its pants down. For some time, people have become tired of the fight against Islamist terrorists. European NATO partners tend to lack the will to increase their engagement against the radical Taliban in Afghanistan. For most of them, the Bush years with the excessive counterterrorism measures are seen as the wrong path. Hope had spread that the problem would go away once Americans no longer provoke Muslim anger with their cowboy attitude.... Islamic extremism won't make it so easy for us to get out of the terror paradigm, which defined the first decade of the new millennium....The era of terror will not be over soon."

Tagesspiegel (1/9) commented: "Following the failed attack on the Airbus on the way to Detroit, all eyes focus on Yemen, where al Qaida recruited and trained the Nigerian. The country at the southern end of the Arab peninsula is plunging into chaos.... It faces the fate of

Afghanistan and Somalia.... As in Afghanistan, al Qaida is spreading in Yemen. The mountainous regions are a secure hideout for the fighters from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iraq.... Only a year ago, the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a was the target of a highly complex suicide action... In the fight against terrorism, [Yemenite President Ali Abdullah] Saleh is no better than his Afghan counterpart Karzai. Washington knows this. As a result, the only option is to stay calm and persistent, integrate the Yemenite people and train Yemenite security forces."

Under the headline "The lesson of Afghanistan," Handelsblatt editorialized: "The case of Yemen is so scary because there are so many similarities to Afghanistan.... The problem is that the situation will not improve by ignoring it. To contain the danger in Yemen, the international community must learn four lessons from Afghanistan. First, it must take care of it quickly without taking on too many responsibilities. The conflicts in Yemen can only be resolved by the

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Yemenites. In Afghanistan, perfectionists took on responsibility for the whole to reconstruct and democratize the country. Secondly, the necessary assistance must be provided. The U.S. stop-and-go policy of recent years makes as little sense as Germany's half-hearted engagement in the training of Afghan police forces. Thirdly, the international community must agree on a common strategy. Not much is won if the Americans focus on the military aspects and the Europeans pursue civilian efforts. The government in Sana'a would only play the allies off against each other, without resolving the conflict. Fourthly, the solution must be found in the region. In the case of Afghanistan, it took years until Pakistan and Iran were seriously involved. Yemen can only be stabilized if the neighbors on the Arab peninsula are part of it right from the start."

### 13. (MEPP) U.S. Pressure on Israel

Frankfurter Allgemeine (1/11) carried a report under the headline: "Clinton: Let's Talk about Borders and Jerusalem Right from the Start," and wrote: "Washington is trying to get the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians going again. Secretary Clinton said over the weekend after talks with Jordanian and Egyptian government officials that the governments in Jerusalem and Ramallah should also address the borderlines around Palestinian areas and the status of Jerusalem right from the start. This approach should help resolve the conflict over the construction of new Israeli settlements, which is currently blocking the peace talks. The Israeli government reacted with outrage to a statement by U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell who indicated in an interview that Washington could cut credit lines for Israel if the peace efforts continued to be blocked because of Jerusalem's position."

In a report headlined: "U.S. Annoyed at Israel" die tageszeitung (1/11) said: "The government in Jerusalem does not want to allow

anyone to put pressure on it by imposing possible sanctions.  
Israel's  
Finance Minister Juval Steinitz said in a self confident but also  
surprised mood: 'At the moment, we are not dependent on credit  
guarantees from the United States.' He added that only a few months  
ago, the White House extended the deadline of the current guarantees  
for another two years, and at that time, no one spoke of  
'conditions.'  
In an interview with PBS the Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace  
Process, George Mitchell indicated that cutting credit guarantees  
would be thinkable if there is no progress in the Middle East peace  
process. Israel's Premier Netanyahu was perplexed at the beginning  
of  
the government meeting on Sunday because the talks did not fail  
because of Israel but because of the Palestinians.' When Mitchell  
again travels to the region "in a few days," then the most recent

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U.S.  
initiative will be on the agenda. It is another U.S. attempt to set  
in motion the difficult peace process again"

#### 14. (U.S.) Harry Reid Comments

Under the headline: "America Argues About 'N'-Word," Sueddeutsche  
Zeitung (1/11) wrote: "It is a simple word, but it is a word that  
has  
lost its innocence in the United States. And that is why this 'N'  
word could cost the career of the leader of the Democrats in the  
U.S.  
Senate, Harry Reid, because he used it casually in a book on the  
election campaign, which were published over the weekend. Harry  
Reid  
did not even try to deny it. On Saturday, he apologized to Barack  
Obama...and the White House published a statement on Saturday in  
which  
the President officially accepted the apology. America is reacting  
in  
a highly sensitive matter to the 'N'-word. It is an irony that Reid  
is Obama's most important ally in Congress."

Die Welt (1/11) headlined: "Racism: Politician Apologizes to  
Obama,"  
and wrote that "for a remark which many consider racist, one of the  
most powerful Democratic politicians had to apologize to President  
Obama But former President Clinton, also once used derogatory  
remarks  
about President Obama. Obama, however, wants to quickly stop the  
debate over Reid's remarks. On Saturday, he used an instrument that  
is unusual for such a case. In an official statement, the White  
House  
said Reid called the president and 'apologized for an unfortunate  
remark.' In addition, Reid apologized to the America people and to  
other Afro-American politicians. Bill Clinton, however, continues  
to  
remain silent about another passage of the book in which he is  
quoted  
with allegedly [similar] remarks."

#### 15. (Italy) Violence Against Africans

Frankfurter Allgemeine (1/11) reported under the headline:  
"Situation  
In Calabria Calming Down," and wrote: "After two days of violent  
clashes between black harvesters, who protested their living  
conditions, and the domestic population, calm returned to the city  
of

Rosarno in Calabria on Sunday.... Politicians criticized the violence of both sides but showed sympathy for the fate of the Africans and understanding of the population. According to news reports, there will also be an investigation of to what extent the Mafia is involved in the matter."

All Africans Gone - Mood to Celebrate in Rosarno," headlined die tageszeitung and reported: "the clashes between immigrants and the domestic population in the Southern Italian village of Rosarno ended

with the complete displacement of the Africans.... On Friday, a citizens committee formed, occupied the town hall and demanded that

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'all blacks' have to disappear from Rosarno. Young people from the city implemented this demand immediately and, armed with clubs and guns, they went on a hunt.... This move had a dramatic effect. On Friday, the Interior Ministry decided to take all Africans away from Rosarno...and among the people from Rosarno, who set up road blocks, a mood of celebration spread."

In an editorial, die tageszeitung (1/11) judged: "For Italy's Interior Minister Roberto Maroni of the xenophobic Lega Norte, one thing is clear: 'A laxness that has existed in Italy's immigration policy for years, ' has prepared the ground for the violent clashes in Rosarno.

He turns arguments in a brazen way upside down. Thousands of Africans - and many with a residence permit - have lived in slave-like conditions on Calabria's fields. They have been exploited with peanuts and have become again and again the target for racist attacks of local youth. ."

16. (Economic) GoogleTax

Justice Minister Leutheuser-Schnarrenberger criticized the strategy of Google and called for greater transparency. She told Der Spiegel that Google is developing into a "vast monopolist, similar to Microsoft."

She added that services such as Google Street View or Google Earth are absolutely worth examining as far as the law is concerned. She said that she is primarily interested in creating greater transparency and to see to it that users are informed on what is going to happen with their data. And if this does not happen soon, the legislative is called upon to do something about it. A Google spokesman rejected the accusations (all major dailies).

Sueddeutsche (1/11) carried an editorial under the headline; "Overdose," and argued: "President Sarkozy launched the idea of introducing a Google tax last week. He did it again out of the blue. He said that the income Google achieves by selling advertisements should be taxed in France and the money should then be passed on to music, book and newspaper editing houses. But even loyal supporters rejected the idea. Why should a successful international company pay for the failure of French companies? And this in view of the fact that not even large French companies pay taxes in France. The

debate  
over the issue lasted only one day until Sarkozy climbed down again  
and dispatched his minister for cultural affairs to tell the public  
that, if at all, such a tax could be introduced only on a European-  
wide scale. Rarely before has one of Sarkozy's ideas lost its  
momentum so quickly."

MURPHY